

ATCHISON TOPEKA & SANTA FE RAILROAD DEPOT  
500 Railroad Avenue  
Las Vegas  
San Miguel County  
New Mexico

HABS NM-208  
*NM-208*

PHOTOGRAPHS

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street NW  
Washington, DC 20240-0001

ADDENDUM TO:  
ATCHISON TOPEKA & SANTA FE RAILROAD DEPOT  
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WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

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## **HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY**

### **Addendum to ATCHISON TOPEKA & SANTA FE RAILROAD DEPOT**

**HABS No. NM-208**

Location: 500 Railroad Avenue, Las Vegas, San Miguel County, New Mexico.

The depot is located within the Railroad Avenue Historic District and is included as a contributing structure in the “Historic Resources of Las Vegas, New Mexico” inventory for the National Register of Historic Places (1984).

Significance: The Atchison Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad Depot replaced the two-story wood building that initially served the railroad customers in Las Vegas, and its construction is a testament to the prosperity of the town and the booming business done by the railway itself at the end of the nineteenth century. The depot is one of the earliest examples of the use of the Mission Revival, or adaptation of the architecture of the southwest, by the Santa Fe railroad. In Las Vegas, the depot is representative of the buildings the railroad created in the “new town” section. The depot was the centerpiece of this neighborhood, which featured the Harvey House Hotel (La Castaneda today) among other commercial buildings and less reputable saloons.

History: The railroad steam-rolled into Las Vegas in July of 1879, although it stopped a mile from the historic city center at the plaza. Soon after, tents and shacks spouted around the railroad facilities in part to accommodate the estimated one thousand newcomers to the area that were drawn to Las Vegas by the rails. The railroad provided employment, as well as fostered the transport of goods that long had followed traders on the Santa Fe trail. Within several years, a more permanent settlement took shape around the depot. Commercial buildings were erected, often incorporating the aesthetic components from the Italianate style as well as new materials like fired bricks and cast iron. In addition, mass-produced, pressed metal details were used for the storefronts and ceilings.

Description: Designed and built by the AT & SF railroad architects between 1898 and 1902, the depot is a one-story structure made of brick. It is covered by a hip roof punctuated by dormers and a parapet with curving profile and a quatrefoil detail. The roof is tiled, as is the shed roof that provides a wrap-around porch-like cover for passengers. Wrought iron brackets support the porch roof.

The depot’s parapet complements the architecture of the nearby La Castaneda Hotel that was designed by Frederic Louis Roehrig. Both buildings were built by the same contractor, Henry Bennett of Topeka, and share design elements of the Mission Revival, although the hipped roof

of the depot is a feature borrowed from the Italian villas then being built in California.<sup>1</sup>

Sources:

“Las Vegas Railroad Depot,” *Historic Las Vegas, New Mexico: Along the Santa Fe Trail*. Las Vegas: Citizens’ Committee for Historic Preservation, 2004.

Marci L. Riskin, *The Train Stops Here: New Mexico’s Railway Legacy*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2005.

Ellen Threinen, “Railroad Avenue Historic District,” Nomination, National Register of Historic Places, 1979.

Chris Wilson, “Nuestra Senora de Los Dolores de Las Vegas (City of Los Vegas),” Nomination, National Register of Historic Places, 1984.

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<sup>1</sup>Marci L. Riskin, *The Train Stops Here: New Mexico’s Railway Legacy* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2005), 61.